

Written Testimony of Candida Flores  
Connecticut State Legislature  
Appropriations Committee  
February 18, 2009

Honorable members of Ct. State Legislature Appropriations Committee:

My name is Candida Flores. I am the Executive Director of Family Life Education, Inc a local human service organization that has been serving families in the Greater Hartford Area for 22 years. I am here to speak with you about the **Governor's proposal to eliminate the Children's Trust Fund and its entire staff and to transfer some of its programs to the Department of Children and Families.**

The Children's Trust Fund has provided funding for the Nurturing Families Program at Family Life Education for the past three years. The NFN program is designed to provide a system of continuous care to promote positive parenting and reduce the incidences of child maltreatment. It is my understanding that the Nurturing Families Program funding is not in jeopardy within the Governor's proposal, so my motivation to come before you today is not to advocate for the interest of the organization I manage.

The NFN program, under the leadership and auspices of the Children's Trust Fund has proven to work and to change outcomes for parents and children. The announcement that there is the potential of moving this and other CTF programs to the Department of Children and Families has created a lot of apprehension among our program participants as well as staff. The philosophy under which the

Children's Trust Fund operates has not only created a funding opportunity for the funded organizations, is has also created partnerships with these organizations. The CTF provides to our organizations more than the typical funder would provide as a way of support, training, guidance, coaching, data that allows us to look at our performance and improve on it. The way the program is structured under the CTF, provides the right environment to reach out to families and truly develop with them a strong bond and relationship that fewer families entering the child protective system and healthier and stronger children.

If the rules change, and they will change if the CTF is dismantled, and the program is moved to a department with a significantly different philosophy, we will not see the positive outcomes we have seen for the past few years. The programs under the Children's Trust Fund are working and are producing the right results. The parents we serve open their doors to our workers daily because they trust us, because they believe we care, because they know we can help. We will lose some of these parents, and most likely it will be the ones that need us the most.

If you need to make cuts, please look at things that don't work and believe me you have plenty to pick from in State Government.